



# DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release SUNDAY, APRIL 6, 1947.

### WATERFOWL INVENTORY SHOWS FEWER DUCKS

For the third successive year American waterfowl populations have declined drastically, Secretary of the Interior J. A. Krug announced today (Saturday). The report of the Secretary is based on the most complete annual inventory ever conducted by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

The January count shows total populations of ducks and geese amounting to only 54,000,000, a drop of 26,000,000 under last year's figures, Service Director Albert M. Day said in a report to Secretary Krug. "This disappointing figure is the result of an analysis of extensive continental survey data compiled from the efforts of more than 1,000 trained observers covering the important waterfowl habitat in the United States, Alaska, Canada and coastal Latin America," he said. "Improvements in the technique and increase in coverage were accomplished by the Fish and Wildlife Service aircraft supported by use of Coast Guard, Navy, and Army planes. Aerial photography was used as a means of checking estimates by field observers."

In spite of the fact that waterfowl numbers have fallen to a low comparable to 1939, the Service Director does not now think it necessary to establish a complete closed season for the fall of 1947. During the extreme dry period of a few years ago when the duck population was only about half as large as it is today, Mr. Day recalled, a break in the drought and limited shooting led to a satisfactory increase.

"In the light of existing knowledge" he said, "I still think the Service will be able to recommend some kind of an open season. Just what it will be depends to a large extent on conditions in the breeding grounds next summer."